



On Patrol

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News From the San Francisco Bay Area Freeway Service Patrol

January 2004

10th Annual Awards Event

by Radiah Taylor Victor



Photo at top: Tow truck rodeo gets under way. Lower photo: Chevron Tow Service employees celebrate winning the Contractor of the Year award. Left to right: Kevin Mullette, Alphonzo Breland, Ruben Banaban, Kim Skinner (company president), Norman Stovall and Mike Nunes.

In 2003, the Bay Area Freeway Service Patrol reached its second 10-year milestone: The annual awards event was the 10th the FSP has celebrated; the program as a whole observed its 10th anniversary in 2002.

FSP drivers, contractors, partners, family and friends gathered at the Officer's Club at Alameda Point (formerly the Alameda Naval Air Station) on Saturday, Sept. 6, 2003, to honor the individual and collective accomplishments achieved within the program over the previous year.

Tow Truck Rodeo

A recent addition to the awards event is the tow truck rodeo. The first rodeo was such a success in 2002 that the second annual competition was a much anticipated event this year. Family and friends cheered for their loved ones as participants maneuvered their tow trucks, each with an attached vehicle, through four obstacle courses. The object of the event was to com-

plete the obstacle courses while accumulating the fewest points. Points were added for hitting or knocking over a cone, for reversing direction when the course required forward movement, and, conversely, for moving forward when the course required backing up. Rich Bilafer of B & A Bodyworks and Towing (*on the left in photo below*) captured first place, Wolfe Cevorov of Campbell's Towing (*on the right*) placed second and Brad Porter of Redhill Towing (*center*) won third place.



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Kids Had Fun, Too

In addition to watching the adult competition, children had an array of activities to keep them busy. Arts and crafts and facepainting provided amusement for some of the children, courtesy of four Great America Towing employees — Rose Santos, Jennifer Beasley, Margaret Loza and Desiree Carrillo — and some of the youngsters enjoyed bouncing in the Sponge Bob Jumper donated by Don Pregent, also of Great America Towing.

Awards

The awards ceremony began with the presentation of service awards for three, five, seven, nine and 10 years of service.

• Three-Year Service Awards

Rufino Sanchez and Hugo Davila, *B & A Bodyworks and Towing*; Ruben Diaz and Michael Malone, *Campbell's Towing*; Kevin Mullette, *Chevron Tow Service*; Thomas Caughey, *Courtesy Road Patrol*; Jerry Vohwinkle, *Great America Towing*; and Francisco Cruz, *Redhill Towing*.

• Five-Year Service Awards

Lee Holmes, *Campbell's Towing*; Joseph McDonald, *Great America Towing*; and James Pope, *Redhill Towing*.

• Seven-Year Service Awards

Patrick Malone, *Campbell's Towing*, and Pedro Rabi, *Redhill Towing*.

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Awards Event

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• Nine-Year Service Awards

Diane Apodaca, *Campbell's Towing*; Linsey Benge, *Chevron Tow Service*; Thomas Frayser, *Pito's Towing*; Anthony Yrigollen, *Redhill Towing*; and Dennis Birosel, *Roadrunner Tow*.

• 10-Year Service Awards

Leon Esquenazi, *Campbell's Towing*, and Douglas Grafmiller, *Courtesy Road Patrol*.

Next, the Contractor's Choice awards were presented to a member of each contractor's staff — drivers or office personnel — in acknowledgment of their contributions to the success of the FSP program.

The **Contractor's Choice** award recipients were: Louise Z. Ray, *A-One Towing*; Jay Taylor, *All Bay Cities Towing*; William Flamenco, *B & A Bodyworks and Towing*; Deepak (Dave) Patel, *Campbell's Towing*; Alphonzo Breland, *Chevron Tow Service*; Douglas Grafmiller, *Courtesy Road Patrol*; Ken Carter, *Dick's Automotive Transport*; Jerry Vohwinkle, *Great America Towing*; Prabhakar Nand, *Ken Betts' Towing*; Alan Best, *Ken's Towing*; Walt Barrows, *Ladd's Autobody and Towing*; Jose Luis Gonzales, *Palace Garage*; Lidia Gonzalez, *Pito's Towing*; James Schick, *Pro Tow Co.*; Kelly Eckels, *Redhill Towing*; and Nicholas Nohr, *Yarbrough Bros. Towing*.

California Highway Patrol (CHP) dispatchers also are honored annually for their contributions to the FSP program. Katie Conry was selected **Dispatcher of the Year** for her outstanding performance and dedication to the FSP program.



Katie Conry

The **Golden Paperclip** award, which is given each year to the contractor who has consistently submitted neat, timely and accurate paperwork, was presented to Rick Mendell and Anthony Yrigollen of Redhill Towing

of Marin. Redhill Towing has been a contractor with the program since 1992 and currently operates Beat 2 along Interstate 80 in Contra Costa County and Beats 7, 13 and 28 along U.S. Highway 101 in Marin County.

The **Public Choice Award** was a new category added in 2003, presented to a driver who has received the most commendation letters, e-mails and voicemails from motorists. Glenn Castaneda of B & A Bodyworks and Towing was the first recipient of this award.

Biswanth Halder of A-One Towing was voted **Driver of the Year**. The award, which is based on feedback from the FSP partners as well as motorist survey forms, letters, e-mails and voice-mails, was awarded to Halder in

recognition of his exemplary work, commitment to the program and pride in his job. He has been with the FSP for four years.



Glenn Castaneda

The **Contractor of the Year** award was presented to Kim Skinner of Chevron Tow Service of Fremont for the excellence of the company's overall performance throughout the year.

Chevron Tow Service has been a contractor with the FSP program since 1994, and was a past recipient of this award in 1995, 1997 and 2000. Runner-up for the Contractor of the Year award, Dick's Automotive Transport, was awarded the **Special Recognition Award** for the firm's contributions to the FSP program.



Biswanth Halder

Enhanced FSP Service This Summer

by Radiah Taylor Victor

Increased hours (including mid-day and Sunday service), nine more miles of coverage and an additional truck are all in the works for improved FSP service starting in the summer of 2004. New contracts for 12 of the 33 existing beats will be initiated, and five of the beats will see changes in either number of hours, miles or trucks on the road.

A request for proposals was issued in November 2003 and two bidders' conferences were held during the first week of December to help prospective bidders meet the Jan. 8, 2004 proposal deadline.

Increased Hours of Operation

In order to improve existing service in Contra Costa County along Interstate 680 and State Route 24, Beat 5's hours of operation will be increased by one hour a day. The evening shift will start one hour earlier than currently — at 2 p.m. instead of 3 p.m. — bringing the

total shift to four and a half hours in length. (Evening hours will end at 6:30 p.m. as they do now.)

Midday and Sunday Service

Two beats will see the addition of midday service to their existing a.m. and p.m. weekday shifts. The new hours — 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. — will go into effect on Beat 11, which operates on U.S. Highway 101 and Interstate 280 in San Francisco and San Mateo County, and on Beat 12 on Interstate 80 in Contra Costa County. Beat 11 also will add Sunday service, covering the midday hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Additional Coverage

In the South Bay, Beat 9 will be extended by nine miles along State Route 85 near the San Jose International Airport. The extension will be served by one new truck as well as a back-up truck redeployed from Beat 29 in Solano County.

Quarterly Awards For July through September 2003

by Réka Goode,
MTC Public Information

BEAT OF THE QUARTER

When Great America Towing Inc. of San Jose assumed the contract for the Free-way Service Patrol's **Beat 8** in July 2002, the nearly 21-mile stretch of Santa Clara County roadway was, according to Great America's owner, Butch Weir, "a problem beat." Now, in a little over a year, Weir said, "It's turned into one of the best." This achievement is reflected in the fact that the beat has been named winner of the Beat of the Quarter award for the third quarter of 2003.

One of the five longest beats in the Bay Area FSP, Beat 8 covers U.S. 101 from Blossom Hill Road to Ellis Street and State Route 237 from U.S. 101 to the Lawrence Expressway. Three tow trucks and one pickup truck are used in patrolling the beat, which, in addition to its weekday morning and afternoon shifts, operates on Sunday afternoons as well.

The four Great America drivers who serve Beat 8 are Gary Page, Joseph McDonald, Peter Methot and Carlos Velasquez (*left to right in the photo below*). Don Pregent is the FSP supervisor, and Margaret Loza handles the FSP paperwork for Great America. Loza notes that the company makes sure that the drivers have everything they need to make a success of their patrol.



Margaret Loza

Great America's Beat 8 drivers

Great America has had a long association with the FSP, having covered Beats 9 and 10 in the South Bay for five years early in the FSP's history, when the now nearly 30-year-old company was under different ownership. Currently, in addition to Beat 8, Great America operates Beat 21 in Alameda County.

DRIVER OF THE QUARTER

Norman Stovall, Bay Area FSP Driver of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2003, is a man who likes results, he says. "Our job out here is to clear the freeway as quickly as possible," the veteran driver declares.



Norman Stovall

In his seven years as a driver for Chevron Tow Service in Fremont, Stovall has had a lot of experience doing just that, and this is the second time he has been rewarded for his

efforts: In addition to the current quarterly honor, he was selected as Driver of the Month in July of 1999.

Stovall covers Beat 14 along Interstate 880 and State Route 84 in the Union City/Fremont area, the fourth beat he's been assigned to over the years. The others were Beats 3, 18 and 21 — all in southern Alameda County. Of the four, he noted that Beat 3, which takes in nearly 10 miles of Interstate 880 in the Hayward area, was the busiest. "It's a very active beat," he said.

In addition to driving for the FSP, Stovall also serves as Chevron's FSP supervisor. As such, he likes to give new drivers the benefit of his years in the program, including a warning about some of the strange people they might meet up with out on the road. But, despite his share of encounters with motorists of this sort, "I've always liked helping people in any way I could," Stovall commented. "I enjoy people's smiles when I come to their rescue — that's my reward."

Upcoming Events

Technical Advisory Committee Meetings

8:30 a.m. Tuesdays
MTC MetroCenter
January 13
March 9

8:30 a.m. Tuesdays
MTC, 1999 Harrison Street
February 10
April 13

Tow Contractors Meetings

11 a.m. Tuesdays
MTC MetroCenter
January 13
March 9

Quarterly Driver Refresher Training

11 a.m.
CHP, Dublin
March 11 & 12
CHP, Oakland
March 25 & 26

Proficiency Testing

7 a.m.
CHP, Vallejo
January 5
April 5

Certification Class

7 a.m. at CHP, Vallejo
January 21–23
April 21–23

2004 FSP CONTRACTS

Notification of contract awards

Friday, March 12, 2004*

Signing of tow contracts

Thursday, March 18, 2004*
MTC, MetroCenter

*tentative date


Welcome back, Jaime!


Congratulations are in order for Jaime C. Maldonado, former FSP project manager for MTC SAFE, who is back in the FSP fold again after six months in MTC's Traveler Coordination and Information section. He has been promoted to senior program coordinator, overseeing not only the FSP program but also the roadside motorist aid call box network for the Bay Area.

The Public Speaks


Motorists continue to mail, e-mail and phone in praise and descriptions of their experiences with the FSP program. Here are a few recent comments.


Voicemail

 (10/10/03) "I just got a flat tire, and received service by the Freeway Service Patrol. The gentleman [who helped me] was very courteous and professional. He made a bad situation much better. To be stuck on the side of the road, and to be [helped] right away, was a godsend. I can't tell you how thankful I am."

 (10/22/03) "I just wanted to thank your people for helping me out today. It was on Interstate 880 before Fruitvale Avenue — I think it is Beat No. 4. I truly appreciate your drivers for coming to my aid."


Letters


 (11/11/03) "I am writing this letter to express my thanks to the FSP as well as to the driver, Jerry Brown (not the mayor or former governor). On Nov. 6, 2003, Jerry Brown was working Beat 30 at about 9 a.m. I had just had a blow-out on Interstate 280. Aside from the stress of having the blow-out, just getting to the side of the road with cars speeding by is also quite stressful. And, then along came this tow truck driver. He was incredibly helpful and kind. He did his job in a professional and expeditious way. He got my spare tire changed so fast that I was not even late for court. It was really a great experience to have been helped. I think this is a great program. If I can be of any [help] by expressing support for this program, please let me know."

 (11/13/03) "On November 7th my automobile stalled on U.S. Highway 101 near the San Francisco Airport as a result of my left rear tire blowing out. I used my cell phone to contact the operator, who apparently transferred my call to 911 and/or a division of the California Highway Patrol. I provided the necessary information, and within 10 minutes the

Freeway Service Patrol arrived and provided no less than excellent service. The situation was somewhat dangerous because of the amount of traffic on the freeway, and the two individuals in your Freeway Service Patrol program were very positive and courteous and provided outstanding service."

E-mail

 (9/15/03) "I want to compliment you on your selection of FSP patrol drivers: My car overheated on Beat 7 on Friday, Sept. 12. Within just a few minutes, Eric pulled up behind me. He identified himself, quickly analyzed the problem, made an interim fix, and had me on my way! Not only was he friendly, efficient and knowledgeable, he was also extremely polite. You are to be commended on your excellent choice of drivers! The FSP system is a wonderful idea, impeccably executed."

 (9/30/03) "I have sent in an FSP survey but I just want to thank you again for providing this valuable service. You helped me out when my tire blew on the highway. It would have taken my personal emergency service 45 minutes to respond but your driver (Driver ID 02-105, Beat 7) found me on the highway in less than 10 minutes. The courtesy, speed and professionalism of your driver were excellent and he had me on my way in a few minutes after putting on my spare tire. I really appreciate it and so do my husband and daughter who were worried about me."

 (10/23/03) "My friend and I, while traveling on U.S. Highway 1 en route from San Francisco, experienced a blow-out on one of our tires. We were very glad to be approached by the California Highway Patrol who radioed for the Freeway Service Patrol who were with us within 10 minutes. A gentleman named Glenn very kindly changed the tire for us and recommended that we drive to the airport and ask the rental company to replace the vehicle. I wanted to express my thanks to Glenn and the Highway Patrol for an efficient and reassuring service to two vacationers [from England] who were a long way from home."



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